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Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum**

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* A/65/150.

** This information was received after the submission of the main report.

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Replies received from Governments

Algeria

[Original: French]
[22 July 2010]

Introduction

During its sixty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 64/68, whereby it once again reaffirmed the importance of promoting peace, strengthening development and building the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the peoples and countries of the Mediterranean region. Indeed, strengthening economic, social and cultural cooperation, combating terrorism and organized crime, and extending solidarity and assistance in order to confront, both individually and collectively, the multifaceted challenges facing the countries in the region are particularly important. These factors contribute not only to the stability and prosperity of the Mediterranean region, but also to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Algeria, which has always had an active Mediterranean policy based on the principles of cooperation and friendship, good neighbourliness and mutual respect, has consistently called for and worked towards the promotion of these principles and their implementation, particularly in the Mediterranean region.

Security and development in the Mediterranean Sea are also linked to peace, security and development in Africa: the challenges and difficulties threatening the stability of the African continent and damaging the well-being and prosperity of its peoples have repercussions for the Mediterranean region and destroy the capacity and potential for cooperation and assistance between the two sides. In that regard, mention can be made of two important developments that occurred between 2009 and 2010: the entry into force of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and Algeria's counter-terrorism initiative in the Sahel.

1. Entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty

With the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty in July 2009, a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has become a reality. This important regional instrument, concluded in accordance with article VII of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, was opened for signature in April 1994 and is an essential step in promoting the goals of disarmament, peace and security in the African continent and in the surrounding areas, including the Mediterranean region.

The Pelindaba Treaty has not only created a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa, but has also established the necessary mechanisms for promoting the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes by States parties, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This objective is also being pursued by the current establishment of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, provided for in the Pelindaba Treaty.

Algeria, which was one of the first countries to sign and ratify the Pelindaba Treaty, has, since its adoption, continually stepped up and made the necessary efforts to promote its entry into force while hastening the establishment of the framework provided for in the Treaty. The full implementation of this instrument,

with the support of the International Atomic Energy Agency in particular, will undoubtedly make a substantial contribution towards promoting the development of nuclear energy in Africa. It should also afford the countries and peoples of Africa greater access to the benefits of using nuclear technologies in agriculture, water, health and the environment.

It is therefore necessary for the nuclear-weapon States, and the other State concerned, to sign and ratify the relevant protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty in order to ensure its full implementation and promotion.

The denuclearization of Africa and the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy on the continent are without question fundamental for strengthening peace and security in the Mediterranean region and around the world. They are also a valuable tool for the economic development of Africa and the promotion of cooperation between the two sides of the Mediterranean.

2. Algeria's counter-terrorism initiative in the Sahel

The increase in the number of terrorist acts committed by terrorist groups in the Sahel region has created a new situation, characterized by a persistent terrorist threat in those areas. Driven back by the ongoing confrontation with and pressure from the security forces in Algeria and other countries in the region, the members of this terrorist organization have chosen to live in the vast area of desert adjoining several States in the region. Their criminal activities are focused primarily on taking Western nationals as hostages and demanding ransom payments to finance their terrorist activities.

In addition, and at the initiative of Algeria, genuine regional cooperation to prevent and combat terrorism in the Sahel was established approximately three years ago. This covers not only the strategic and military operational framework, but also economic and social development programmes for the local population.

It was in that context that the Conference of Foreign Ministers of States of the Sahel region was held in Algiers in March 2010. The participants examined and identified the measures needed to combat terrorism and associated ills in the region. This conference is the first step in an important process; it was followed, in April, by a meeting of Chiefs of Staff of the armies and security services of the countries in the region. That meeting helped to identify practical and operational measures to ensure coordination between the security forces of the States concerned in combating the terrorist networks and their criminal activities. In addition, an operational centre has been set up in southern Algeria, with significant technical and logistical means.

Such cooperation is also seen in the implementation of training programmes for security and customs officers, provided by Algeria for the benefit of the countries in the region, to enable them to develop their relevant administrative, technical and operational capacities.

It is also important to highlight the role played by the African Union's African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, which has its headquarters in Algiers. The Centre makes an important contribution towards preventing and combating terrorism and related phenomena, such as illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

In that regard, the Centre, together with the Governments of Italy and Germany, organized a workshop on cross-border arms trafficking in March 2010. The workshop brought together representatives of 14 West African countries and experts from the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States, the International Criminal Police Organization and the European Commission. The outcome was a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening relevant national capacities in the areas of customs, border controls and combating arms trafficking.

The worrying prevailing situation in the Sahel region has repercussions for the security and stability of the whole African continent. It requires a redoubling of efforts and a strengthening of cooperation between the countries in the region as they work to combat this scourge. It also requires significant support from the international community, from developed countries in particular, and from the relevant international organizations, in order to strengthen the capacities of the countries in the Sahel region to deal with these challenges.

Belgium

[Original: French]
[12 August 2010]

Belgium considers it very important that the European Union be surrounded by friendly nations which enjoy political stability and rapid economic growth.

Since 1995, relations between the European Union and the countries in the southern and eastern Mediterranean have been governed by the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, also known as the Barcelona Process, which was relaunched as a multilateral body, the Union for the Mediterranean, at the Paris Summit of 13 July 2008. The dialogue and cooperation established within that framework remain an important objective of Belgium's foreign policy in this region. The Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements, which serve as a bridge between most of the Maghreb and Mashreq countries and the European Union, contain policy dialogue for addressing sensitive issues such as human rights. Belgium's approach helps to build awareness on the importance of strengthening, inter alia, good governance, the rule of law, democracy, the economy and education.

The European Neighbourhood Policy, established in 2004, complements and strengthens the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership through bilateral plans of action concluded with most of the Mediterranean countries. These plans cover many areas ranging from policy dialogue and reform to economic and social cooperation and also address cooperation in the areas of justice, security and liberty. Belgium continues to encourage its Mediterranean partners fully to implement the plans of action adopted in the framework of the structures set out in the Association Agreements.

Outside the context of Europe, Belgium is also paying close attention to the Mediterranean Dialogue under way in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Belgium's security policy is shaped on the basis of this multilateral context, including its membership of these two organizations.

The NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, launched in 1994, currently involves seven countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. It primarily reflects the importance that NATO attaches to regional stability and to

maintaining transparency vis-à-vis its neighbouring countries. The Mediterranean Dialogue is carried out at various levels, and has both multilateral and bilateral dimensions. Partners can build on this dialogue in accordance with their own priorities and their individual cooperation programme. This cooperation covers policy dialogue and a practical dimension ranging across matters of public diplomacy, working groups and seminars. It also has a military dimension, including such aspects as counter-terrorism activities and weapons of mass destruction.

The OSCE Mediterranean Dialogue involves the same countries except Mauritania, and focuses mainly on cooperation and the sharing of political and military, economic, environmental and human experiences. Discussions cover topics such as building confidence, fostering standards of conduct, addressing new threats to security and stability and adopting a global approach to security.

Lastly, Belgium welcomes any regional initiative aiming to strengthen ties among countries in the Mediterranean area, particularly through building strong and fruitful economic and trade relations. Thus, Belgium considers the Agadir Agreement — which was signed in 2004 and entered into force in March 2007 and which creates a free trade area between the signatory countries (Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia) — to be one of the region's more important initiatives fostering economic growth and stabilization. Belgium is also closely following the efforts by the member States of the Arab Maghreb Union to bring the Union out of its deadlock, and to set up an effective mechanism for cooperation among the countries of the Maghreb.

Serbia

[Original: English]
[3 August 2010]

Serbia is a next-door neighbour to the countries of the Mediterranean region and is fully supportive of the existing multilateral initiatives, mechanisms and processes aimed at developing cooperation, promoting dialogue and common activities with regard to strengthening the security and stability of the Mediterranean region.

In view of the fact that it has embarked upon the irreversible process of European integration and that it has invested great efforts and conducted comprehensive activities in order to comply with its international obligations and to strengthen its internal capacities to join the European Union, Serbia is committed to European Union mechanisms and efforts aimed at improving political and security dialogue with the Mediterranean region, and supports the building of a common zone of security and stability.

Through mechanisms and instruments of cooperation, both regional and global, Serbia has been actively cooperating in strengthening European security, and has been a staunch supporter of its indivisibility. It fully respects the basic principles of the Charter of the United Nations and other instruments in this field. With the aim of maintaining its own territorial integrity and sovereignty, as well as developing good-neighbourly relations and regional cooperation, Serbia welcomes all the efforts of the countries of the Mediterranean region, international organizations and institutions that will, in the future, contribute to a positive influence of the achieved level of security and stability of the region on its economic development, social security and the protection of basic human rights and freedoms.

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Sixty-fifth session
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General and complete disarmament

Missiles

Report of the Secretary-General

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* A/65/150.
** The information contained in the addendum was received after the submission of the main report.

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II. Replies received from Member States

Iraq

[Original: English]
[21 July 2010]

When addressing the missile issue, the security concerns of member States at the international and regional levels must be taken into account.

The right of States to acquire legitimate means of defence in order to defend their security and protect their citizens must also be respected.

We stress that the purpose of focusing the efforts of the United Nations on the missile issue is to address means of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

The Iraqi Ministry of Defense supports the conclusion to address the issue of missiles contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Missiles (A/63/176), reached by the Panel of Governmental Experts established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 59/67.

Jordan

[Original: Arabic]
[10 August 2010]

The current situation with regard to missiles is unsatisfactory. At present, it is not possible to verify measures taken towards disarmament and limitation of missile stocks. Nor is there a binding multilateral instrument aimed at limiting the possession and development of missiles or certain categories thereof.

The illicit transfer of man-portable air defence systems should receive close examination at the national, regional and international levels, with a view to limiting and preventing their proliferation.

Priority should be given to the Missile Transfer Control Regime, whose object is to control the transfer of missile components and technologies that could be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction. Although the Missile Transfer Control Regime ought to be universal, only 34 Member States are currently partners.

The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms (1992) is a voluntary register of ballistic missiles and guided and unguided cruise missiles which can deliver warheads and destructive weapons within a range of at least 25 kilometres. The types of missile which the United Nations has addressed include ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and man-portable air defence systems.

In 2004, the United Nations welcomed the subscription of 120 States to the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (The Hague Code of Conduct). That instrument is intended to comprehensively limit and prevent the proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction. Jordan has subscribed to the Code of Conduct, having signed it on 25 November 2002.

International attention has also focused on cruise missiles, which can fulfil many of the same functions as ballistic missiles and have been used more frequently

in military interventions. While cruise missiles have been used in conflict in order to deliver powerful explosives, they can also be used to deliver weapons of mass destruction.

Man-portable air defence systems have received increasing international attention, including on the part of the United Nations. The report of the Secretary-General entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" (A/59/2005) describes man-portable air defence systems and ballistic missiles as comparable security challenges:

> The availability of ballistic missiles with extended range and greater accuracy is of growing concern to many States, as is the spread of shoulder-fired missiles which could be used by terrorists. Member States should adopt effective national export controls covering missiles and other means of delivery for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons, rockets and shoulder-fired missiles, as well as a ban on transferring any of them to non-State actors. The Security Council should also consider adopting a resolution aimed at making it harder for terrorists to acquire or use shoulder-fired missiles.

An international consensus should be developed leading to the conclusion of a treaty or convention prohibiting the use of ballistic missiles, man-portable air defence systems and all missiles delivering weapons of mass destruction.

Action should be taken in order to promote the idea of universalizing the Missile Technology Control Regime and develop an effective missile deployment monitoring system.

A system should be developed in order to provide incentives and security safeguards for States that renounce, or refrain from acquiring, missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction.

States should be encouraged to adopt voluntary confidence-building measures, something that requires a direct, genuine commitment and United Nations guarantees in respect of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and possession by one or more specific States.

Lebanon

[Original: Arabic]
[21 July 2010]

The Ministry wishes to inform you that it has no observations concerning any aspect of the question of missiles. Lebanon does not possess projectiles of that kind (missiles), and is committed to United Nations resolutions concerning the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East region. Furthermore, it is opposed to the legality of the threat or use of such weapons.

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Sixty-fifth session
Agenda item 97 (e)
General and complete disarmament

Missiles

Report of the Secretary-General

Addendum*

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* The information contained in the addendum was received after the submission of the main report.

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II. Replies received from Member States

Islamic Republic of Iran

[Original: English]
[30 September 2010]

1. Given the complex nature of the issue of missiles, dealing with such an important issue requires a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach. To meet this need, the item of "the issue of missiles in all its aspects" was first introduced, at the initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, into the agenda of the General Assembly in 1999. Since then, notable progress has been made in addressing the issue of missiles within the framework of the United Nations.

2. The Islamic Republic of Iran welcomes the report of the Secretary-General (A/63/176), without necessarily agreeing to all of its points. In view of the complex nature of the issue, the successful conclusion of the report represents a positive step forward in the United Nations efforts to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects. As noted in the report, the panel succeeded in deliberating upon key issues related to missiles and identified some elements, as listed in paragraphs 17 and 21 of the report, for consideration in further discussions of the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

3. With respect to subparagraphs 17 (b) and (h), the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that in addressing the issue of missiles in all its aspects, a distinction should be made between the field of non-conventional and conventional ordnance. Presently, non-conventionally armed ballistic and cruise missiles pose the most serious threat to international peace and security. We note with grave concern that nuclear tipped missiles continue to have an important role in the doctrine of some States, as stated in paragraph 13 of the report. As indicated in subparagraph 17 (h) of the report, the threat of non-conventionally armed missiles should be dealt with as the highest priority in any approach towards missiles within the framework of the United Nations.

4. With respect to paragraph 20 of the report, Iran underlines the need for a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory approach to address the complex issue of missiles in all its aspects. Such an approach has to include non-conventional as well as conventional aspects of the issue, along with peaceful and civilian applications of missile technology. It must also take into account the security concerns and conventional defensive needs of States. Such security concerns are much more evident in the regions where extraregional forces are present and the universality of international treaties banning weapons of mass destruction has not yet been achieved.

5. Regarding subparagraph 17 (e), the Islamic Republic of Iran fully agrees that the issue of the application of space-launch-vehicle technology for peaceful uses of outer space should be part of any comprehensive and balanced approach towards the issue of missiles in all its aspects. However, we disagree with positions that advocate denying the access of developing countries to civilian space technology, under the pretext of security concerns. Some developing countries have sought self-sufficiency in satellite launchers and independent access to space for a number of reasons. These are: the increased contribution of space-based capabilities to a wide range of human endeavours, the limited number of provider countries for

commercial space transportation services, the high cost of these services and the existence of recent examples of politicization and interruption of such services. To strike a balance between security concerns and the growing need for civilian application of space-launch-vehicle technology, Iran calls for the establishment of universally and regionally agreed arrangements aimed at promoting predictable and reliable international cooperation in this field.

6. As to the initiatives outside the United Nations, we are of the view that such efforts suffer from inherent shortcomings. These include non-transparent formation processes, an exclusive focus on non-proliferation and export control, a total disregard for disarmament goals, the application of a double-standard approach to the implementation of non-proliferation measures and the creation of impediments to the access of developing countries to peaceful space technology. Owing to their shortcomings, these initiatives have failed to achieve universal acceptance and legitimacy.

7. As noted in paragraph 16 of the report, the development of missile defence systems (regional and/or global) and its impact on international peace and security was one of the key issues that was raised and discussed in the panel. We believe the specific ongoing efforts to develop and deploy missile defence systems such as Aegis and THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defence) by extraregional forces in some regions would jeopardize regional and international peace and stability and, consequently, will lead to an arms race on the regional and global scales.

8. The report underscores the important role of the United Nations in providing an effective mechanism for identifying and building areas of consensus. The Islamic Republic of Iran believes that the United Nations, as the most encompassing and representative international body, is the appropriate forum for exploring and building potential areas of consensus on the complex issue of missiles. The Islamic Republic of Iran underlines the importance of continued efforts within the United Nations to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects in a comprehensive, balanced and non-discriminatory manner. Towards this end, the continuation of deliberations within the United Nations, specifically focusing attention on areas of consensus, is advisable. As the next step in carrying forward the deliberations within the United Nations, we share the conclusion of the report in its paragraph 21 that it would be useful to try to develop understandings on how to categorize and describe missiles.